THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. R. DAS MUNSHI): (a) The text of the International Natural Rubber Agreement, 1987, was finalised at the conclusion of the fourth part of the UN Conference on Natural Rubber held under the aegis of UNCTAD from 9—20 March, 1987.

(b) The Agreement mainly aims at price stabilisation. In this connection it provides for an international buffer stock of 5,50,000 tonnes and stipulates the reference price and intervention price levels. The Agreement also envisages measures in the areas of research and development, improvement of productivity, development of end-uses etc.

(c) International price stabilisation is in our interest.

Gangs engaged in fake pass-port rackets

1009. SHRI MUKHTIAR SINGH MALIK:
SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY:

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether two gangs engaged in fake passport rackets were recently apprehended in the capital by the Delhi Police;

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard; and

(c) what action Government have taken against the persons arrested in this connection?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) to (c) In the first week of March, 1987, the Delhi Police unearthed two different gangs involved in cheating & forgery of passports. One of the two gangs was also involved in the theft of travellers' cheques, passports and credit cards.

Cases under various sections of law have been registered. Four persons have been arrested and a number of documents seized.

Grants-in-Aaid to Tobacco Board

1010. SHRI MUKHTIAR SINGH MALIK:
SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government of Andhra Pradesh have approached the Central Government for a grants-in-aid to the Tobacco Board to purchase tobacco in Andhra Pradesh so as to help the tobacco growers in that State;

(b) whether the Central Government have since considered the request of the State Government; and

(c) if so, the quantum of grants-in-aid given for the purpose?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. R. DAS MUNSHI): (a) to (c) No proposal has been received from the Government of Andhra Pradesh for a grant-in-aid to the Tobacco Board to purchase tobacco in A.P. However, in view of the lesser purchases of tobacco at the auctions platforms in A.P. this year compared to last year, the State Government had requested for immediate purchase of tobacco by the Tobacco Board at the Minimum Support Prices and to direct the State Trading Corporation (STC) to undertake commercial purchase of tobacco.

The Tobacco Board and the STC have already entered the auctions and procured substantial quantity of tobacco. Necessary funds have already been placed at the disposal of the Tobacco Board for the required